

Area Three: Speech

Individual Events

- Category 1: Dramatic Interpretation
- Category 2: Oral Interpretation of Poetry
- Category 3: Religious Reading
- Category 4: Declamation
- Category 5: Humorous Interpretation
- Category 6: Original Persuasive Oratory
- Category 7: Extemporaneous Speaking
- Category 8: Oral Interpretation of Scripture

Group Events

- Category 9: Acting
- Category 10: Readers Theatre
- Category 11: Choric Speaking
- Category 12: Debate

Speech General Rules

1. All material should be in good taste and of high quality. Entries will not be restricted to sacred themes. However, entries which reflect anti-biblical themes, content, and/or word usage (including profanity or suggestive language)—or which contain sensualism, humanism, or worldliness (including offensive performance)—will be disqualified.
2. No student or group will perform the same selection in two consecutive years. In addition, the same selection is not to be used by multiple groups from the same school in the same year.
3. Singing of a song during a speech is to be limited to no more than one verse of the song or no more than 1.5 minutes of the speech. In addition, no instrument may be used to accompany the individual or group during the speech performance.
4. All selections are to be memorized (no scripts permitted), excluding the areas of Debate, Original Persuasive Oratory, and Extemporaneous Speaking.
5. Each student must submit three typewritten copies of his selection to the judges prior to his performance.
6. A lectern may be used only in the categories of Debate and Extemporaneous Speaking.
7. The following rules apply to categories 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8.
 - a. Body movement should be primarily, but not limited to, movement above the waist.
 - b. No hand props or costume pieces will be permitted.
 - c. All selections will be taken from published works.
 - d. In addition to General Rule 10, the contestant may reintroduce himself, the selection, and author as well as provide the audience with necessary background information in order to set the mood for the piece. He may also give transitional narrative for clarity within the piece. These additions combined are not to exceed 1 minute and are included in the time limit. Transitional material must be included in the script provided for the judges.
8. The time limit for all individual categories (Categories 1–8) is 5–10 minutes. With the exception of Debate, the time limit for all group categories (Categories 9–11) is 5–13 minutes.
9. Students will be penalized for going over time or under time in any category of competition where time limits are established. When a student violates his time limit by more than one minute, the student will be disqualified. However, if he is over time or under time, but not by one minute, points or a fraction of a point will be deducted which will prevent an otherwise first-place winner from placing first, a second-place winner from placing second, or a third-place winner from placing third.

National Competition Manual – Area Three: Speech

10. The judge will confirm the speaker and say, “You may begin.” Timing and adjudication will begin immediately.
11. Selected students will be chosen from the first session to participate in the final competition session.
 - a. Call-backs will be held if there are ten or more entries in a speech category (Categories 1–11).
 - b. In categories where second rounds are called (speech, preaching, Bible teaching), AACS will provide judging forms for the second round. The competitor must provide judging forms for the first round. Students must use the AACS judging forms from the current National Competition Manual.
12. **Recording is absolutely prohibited** except for the recording of a **single entry** by representatives of the participant’s school for personal use. The recording of all or portions of the performance of more than one entry in an event is prohibited. In any case, the head judge in a competition may prohibit recording. No recording made by anyone other than competition officials may be considered for adjudication purposes.

Rules by Category (Individual Competition)

Category 1: Dramatic Interpretation

Category 2: Oral Interpretation of Poetry

Category 3: Religious Reading

Category 4: Declamation

Category 5: Humorous Interpretation

Category 6: Original Persuasive Oratory

Category 7: Extemporaneous Speaking

Category 8: Oral Interpretation of Scripture

Category 1: Dramatic Interpretation

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation by an individual of a serious selection of narrative or dramatic literature.

1. Cuttings may incorporate multiple characters, but monologues are acceptable.
2. Religious readings are not appropriate and should be entered in Category 3: Religious Reading.

Category 2: Oral Interpretation of Poetry

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation of poetry by an individual.

1. Selections from the Bible are not appropriate and should be entered in Category 8: Oral Interpretation of Scripture.
2. Selection must be a single work or a cutting of a longer work.

Category 3: Religious Reading

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation of prose by an individual.

1. The selection should inspire or convict spiritually.
2. The presentation should include dialogue and be dramatic in nature.
3. Selections from the Bible are not appropriate and should be entered in Category 8: Oral Interpretation of Scripture.

National Competition Manual – Area Three: Speech

Category 4: Declamation

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation of persuasive or inspirational material of high literary value, originally prepared by and presented orally by another person or persons.

1. Selections must come from published speeches.
2. The delivery should not be acted out with characters. The delivery should be free from contrived accents. The delivery should be directed toward the audience and not toward an assumed off-stage audience.
3. Selections from the Bible are not appropriate and should be entered in Category 8: Oral Interpretation of Scripture.

Category 5: Humorous Interpretation

Definition: The memorized oral interpretation of a humorous selection by an individual.

1. Cuttings are to be taken from published plays or prose.
2. Selections with multiple characters are preferred.

Category 6: Original Persuasive Oratory

Definition: The largely memorized oral presentation of an original persuasive speech by an individual of which no more than 10% is direct quotation. It is designed to move an audience toward personal action or to sway audience opinion.

1. Only one 3 x 5 card of notes may be used.
2. Small hand props or costume pieces may not be used. Posters, charts, etc., will not be allowed.
3. Three typewritten scripts must be submitted to the judges at performance time.

Category 7: Extemporaneous Speaking

Definition: A persuasive speech on a current issue. The student will be given 30 minutes of preparation time. Topics, drawn randomly, will be from the January, February, and March issues of various news magazines. Refer to the AACCS website for the current list.

1. Topics will be stated as questions requiring the student to take a position on the issue.
2. At ten-minute intervals each student will draw three topic cards. The student will select one topic and advise the judge of his choice. All three topic cards will then be returned to the judge for subsequent drawings. Prior to a final round (if one is needed) all topic cards used in the preliminary rounds will be discarded.
3. Students will prepare speeches without consultation and without references to prepared notes.
 - a. Students may access research brought with them to the competition during the preparation period.
 - b. Students should review news articles and opinion pieces from reputable sources.
 - c. Student research and speech references are not limited to the magazines from which topics will be drawn. Research documents may be paper or electronic.
 - d. Students may **not** access the Internet during the 30-minute prep period.
 - e. All articles referenced must be printed or stored on a laptop or tablet.
 - f. Referenced documents may be originals or copies of whole pages.

National Competition Manual – Area Three: Speech

- g. No written material is permitted on any referenced document other than citation information.
 - h. Underlining or highlighting on referenced documents is permitted *if done in only one color on each article*.
 - i. Students may access no other material during the preparation period—no speeches, handbooks, outlines, or briefs are permitted.
4. Students will not receive any assistance during preparation time.
 5. A student is permitted to use one 3 x 5 card for notes.
 6. The timekeeper will show numbered cards nine through one at one-minute intervals during the speech to alert the speaker of remaining time.
 7. A competing student is not permitted to listen to other students until after he has completed his speech.

Category 8: Oral Interpretation of Scripture

Definition: A memorized oral interpretation by an individual of one long or two short passages from the Bible (King James Version only, see General Information: Bible Usage), with appropriate introduction and transition. Performers are encouraged to select narrative (story) passages. A passage with dialogue in which characters speak is recommended. Students will be evaluated based on the effective use of distinct and separate characters.

Rules by Category (Group Competition)

Category 9: Acting

Category 10: Readers Theatre

Category 11: Choric Speaking

Category 12: Debate

Category 9: Acting

Definition: A stage performance in which two to six individuals each portray one character without the use of script, costumes, staging, lights, sound effects, or makeup.

1. Cuttings must be taken from published dramatic literature, published plays by a reputable author, or from published prose that has been scripted for stage.
2. Acting will develop understandable scenes with clear character action and reaction. The scene(s) should grow through increased insight, intensification of plot or mood, and thematic statement.
3. Actors may speak to silent or off-stage characters.
4. Each actor may portray only one character.
5. Narration: A brief introduction or scene description may be given, but is not required, for each scene change. The narration must be done by one or more of the actors. The narration may be done by any of the actors and does not violate the requirement that each actor may portray only one character.
6. Full costuming is not permitted. Actors may make use of small hand props and costume accessories (such as an umbrella, shawl, gloves, hat, glasses, etc.). In a quality performance, small props may be used appropriately to enhance the performance and props are not used excessively so that they distract from the performance.
7. Participants must be able to perform their scene(s) in an acting space of approximately 18' x 10'.
8. Prohibited elements in this category include Readers Theatre performances, full costuming, makeup, lighting, and furniture other than a table and chairs, stools, or boxes.

National Competition Manual – Area Three: Speech

Category 10: Readers Theatre

Definition: The oral presentation of dramatic, poetic, or prose material by a group focused on the audience, utilizing some or all of the following techniques: effective use of distinct and separate characters, out of scene, characterization, group speaking, and group movement. The presentation may include these types: cameo (face only movement), upper body, or whole body movement. Characters are not to interact with each other as they do in Acting. (Refer to Distinctions between Readers Theatre and Choric Speaking.)

1. Group size consists of three to six individuals.
2. Readers may make use of small hand props and costume accessories (such as an umbrella, shawl, gloves, hat, glasses, etc.). In a quality performance, small props may be used appropriately to enhance the performance and props are not used excessively to that they distract from the performance. No makeup, lighting, full costumes, or furniture other than a table, chairs, and stools. Platforms or prop boxes are permitted.
3. All members dressed in black (or any color) or in the same style shall not be considered to be wearing costumes.
4. The presentation will be judged on originality of arrangement and the skillful use of the techniques to move the audience with the chosen material. Memorization is required. It may not be directed.
5. Any form of literature, poetry or prose, adapted to the Readers Theatre form will be appropriate for this contest. All literature must meet acceptable guidelines.

Category 11: Choric Speaking

Definition: An oral group presentation utilizing some or all of the following techniques: unison speaking, solo speaking, vocal effects, word color, dramatic climax, and group movement. Characters are not to interact with each other as they do in Acting. (Refer to Distinctions between Readers Theatre and Choric Speaking.)

1. Group size consists of seven to fifteen individuals.
2. The presentation must be memorized. It may not be directed.
3. All members dressed in the same color or style shall not be considered to be wearing costumes.
4. The presentation will be judged on originality of arrangement and the skillful use of the techniques to move the audience with the chosen material.
5. Scripts: Any form of literature, poetry, or prose adapted to Choric Speaking form will be appropriate for this contest. All literature and music used in the choric reading must be published material. More than one script may be combined along with music to design the Choric Reading; otherwise the scripts must meet guidelines listed in Speech General Rules 1.
6. Movement/Interaction:
 - a. Group movement may be used to enhance the presentation, but should be limited to simple choices such as changing positions between “scenes” or divisions in the presentation.
 - b. Movement, individual and group, should be more limited than movement in Readers Theatre.
 - c. Characters are not to interact with each other, as they do in Acting. All speaking and visual expression is to be directed toward the audience rather than toward other actors. There should be no intentional physical contact between characters.
7. Hand Props/Instruments: No hand props or costume pieces will be permitted. An instrument may not be played during the presentation and auditory props may not be used.
8. Risers may be used.

National Competition Manual – Area Three: Speech

9. Music: Any form of singing or music used in the presentation should be used to complement the speech effects, and may not exceed 1.5 minutes of the entire presentation.
10. Use of Voice and Group vs. Individual Voices: Performers are to express different pitch levels, pace, pause effect, rate, intensity, and volume. Their speech should be expressed mainly in groups of voices, with **infrequent** solo lines. Large and small group voices must dominate. Excessive use of dialogue between characters without engagement of the chorus must not dominate the performance. Diction must be clearly understood, spoken with ease, and expressed with energy.

Distinctions between Readers Theatre and Choric Speaking

1. Readers Theatre emphasizes the individual performers, whereas Choric Speaking emphasizes the group speaking with one collective “voice.”
2. Readers Theatre relies on each individual speaker’s unique characterizations and use of other individual acting techniques, while Choric Speaking relies on the group speaking as one body using varying combinations of unison and solo voices.
3. Readers Theatre is more closely related to characterization and acting, while Choric Speaking is basically a speaking choir with many voices.
4. The emphasis of Readers Theatre is the dramatized development of a text via visual elements and the spoken interaction of individual performers. The emphasis of Choric Speaking is the creative use of the voice (vocal variety, word color, etc.) in a choral manner to reinforce the meaning of the text. Choric Speaking is primarily an auditory presentation.

Category 12: Debate

Schedule Notice: The schedule for Debate at the National Competition will make it extremely difficult, or impossible, for debaters to participate in other performance competitions. Debaters are warned **not** to register for other performances, as there is a strong possibility that schedules will conflict. If a competitor is involved in other events that conflict, **he will be required to forfeit the conflicting event(s).**

Definition: Organized oral argument on a current event topic providing participant opportunity to display skills of logical reasoning, research and use of evidence, oral persuasion, conversational, and extemporaneous delivery before a critic.

1. A team will consist of two members, both of whom must be present to avoid forfeiture.
2. A team will be prepared to debate both the pro and con positions of the issue.
3. Rules and tournament procedures (including judging forms) will adhere to the rules published by the National Speech and Debate Association, www.speechanddebate.org. Guidelines to help students prepare for Debate are found at www.speechanddebate.org. Debate procedures are in the Appendix.
4. A script or notes will be acceptable.
5. Computers will be allowed at the national level. Online access is **not** allowed. The guidelines for computer use as published by the National Speech and Debate Association will be followed.
6. The debate topic changes each year. The state and national topic will be announced by AACS on the AACS website.

Research is the key to effective debate. Delivery is secondary. All aspects of the topic from both the affirmative and the negative positions should be researched thoroughly, since debaters will be required to defend both sides of the question sometime during the competition.